

THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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No. 6

WHEN FOUND—

IT is quite unnecessary to remind our readers that the 9th of the present month will be the thirty-eighth anniversary of the death of Charles Dickens. Each June it is our custom to reprint an article upon the novelist from a contemporary paper. This year we have chosen the one from the *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, a eulogium evidently from an ardent admirer of the novelist. Although nearly two score years have passed since, there is scarcely a line in it that present-day opinion does not substantiate. But the writer touches upon one point in Dickens's great nature which is particularly appropriate in our present number.

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He says: "The greatest of all Masters of the human heart said: 'Suffer little children to come unto Me!' From little Paul and little Nell came a wisdom better than the Philosophy of the Schools; telling us in the sweetness and freshness of childhood were to be found a teaching enkindling Divine affections, awakening us out of the darkness of sordid calculation to the light of love and goodness. The author of *The Old Curiosity Shop* preached his Gospel of Charity as no other human author had ever preached before. We are grateful to his memory because of all this."

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On another page of this issue will be found an appeal from the Hospital for sick children in Great Ormond Street for funds to help carry on the grand work they have been doing for years. Most of our readers know how interested Dickens was in this hospital, and how he helped it whenever it was possible. May we, with the knowledge of how true are those words expressed above, make a special appeal to our readers to send a small donation for this hospital, in memory of the 9th of June, 1870? We shall be pleased to open a subscription list in our pages, and forward any amount, however small, to the secretary.

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We have received a pamphlet from Messrs. A. Stace & Sons, booksellers, of Folkestone, entitled "Recollections of Charles Dickens at Folkestone in 1855," by a Native. It is quite a small pamphlet, but it is nevertheless full of interest from cover to cover. In it we learn that Mark Tapley, Mr. Pancks, and Mr. Gradgrind all had their origin in Folkestone personages. Mr. E. Dale, for that is the "Native's" name, deals with Dickens's association with the famous seaside resort at the time he wrote "Out of

Town," the short article dealing with Folkestone which appears in *Reprinted Pieces*. The price of the pamphlet is twopence halfpenny, post free, and we recommend all readers to secure a copy.

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As announced in our last issue, the annual Summer Festival of the Dickens Fellowship will take place this year at Broadstairs, on Saturday, June 20th. It will be an important and interesting function, for on the occasion tablets will be fixed to four houses in which Dickens lived and wrote, notifying the facts. These houses are 31, High Street, where he wrote the latter parts of *The Pickwick Papers*; Lawn House, where he wrote a portion of *Barnaby Rudge*; and the Albion Hotel (once known as Ballard's), where he spent many a summer holiday. Fort House (now known as Bleak House) has been already suitably memorialized by the present owner, but an additional tablet will be fixed under the library window.

* * * *

The train leaves Victoria (S.E. & Chatham Railway) at 7.10 a.m., and those taking part in the Festival should meet not later than seven o'clock outside the booking office, where tickets will be distributed. Special compartments will be reserved for the party. On arriving at Broadstairs the company will be met by the officers and members of the Isle of Thanet Branch, and the unveiling of the tablets will then take place. After being escorted to the other Dickensian places of interest, luncheon will be taken in the "Pavilion" at one o'clock. Bleak House will be visited at 2.30, and special permission to go over it has been granted by Mr. Barry, who is president of the Branch there. The party will be photographed in the gardens. Tea will be served in the "Pavilion" at five o'clock. The train leaves on the return journey at 8.15. The cost of the excursion, including railway fare, luncheon and tea, is 8s. 6d., and those intending to join the party should send remittance at once to Mr. J. W. T. Ley, at 1, Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, W.C.

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Broadstairs is one of the most interesting Dickensian land-marks outside London, and it is anticipated that a large company will take part in the Festival, as plenty of time will also be available for enjoying the pleasant sea air and country. In our present issue will be found an article dealing with Dickens's associations with this sea-side resort, illustrated with a series of special pictures.

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On June 8th, a special Dickens week will commence at the Kennington Theatre, where will be performed "The Old Curiosity Shop," in four acts, preceded by a one-act piece entitled "Dolly Varden," by Mr. W. Dexter. The cast will include Mrs. Teignmouth Shore as the Marchioness, Miss Kathleen Marriott as Little Nell, Miss May Daniel as Sally Brass, Miss H. Pearl Humphreys as Mrs. Quilp, Mr. Frank Staff as Dick Swiveller, Mr. A. E. Brookes Cross as Sampson Brass, Mr. Syd Ewart as the Grandfather, Mr. A. T. Harry as Quilp, and Mr. Harold Reeve as Kit. A matinée will be given on Whit Monday.

THE EDITOR.

DICKENS, THE GREAT MAGICIAN *

THE man whom, of all others, we could least afford to spare, has been taken from amongst us. Before he had entered upon the Evening of his Life, and while his days had not passed well-ripened maturity, Death is written against his name. The Great Magician who has called up a realm of Truth and Beauty, and given to the world creations of infinite excellence, has passed from amongst us. His wand has fallen from his hand, and the matchless genius that no longer works for man is inherited by no other who can carry on the noble work which has given to the name of Charles Dickens an imperishable lustre. The Nation sorrows. It has lost one who, though standing alone in his rare and significant inspiration, was yet, by the expansion of his great nature, so entangled in the hearts of men that all feel a dearly loved friend has been taken from their midst. As there is but one Shakespeare, one Milton, one Byron, one Burns, so there is but one Charles Dickens. In his works, as in his life, there is a completedness—a unity. The tree had consummated its grandeur—all its foliage had come to it; not one more leaf was to be added—the tree in its richness and freshness of verdure, before it bore a single withered branch, was to fall.

If the mind of an author whose hopes and ambitions are for the weal of his countrymen is looked upon as the property of his country, then, perhaps, we can find comfort in the event which has cast so deep a gloom over every part of the land. It is given to few men to retain in the “sere and yellow leaf” of the body a mental constitution as vigorous and great as when its temple has few signs of decay. Though in its awful suddenness we mourn as we have mourned never before over the flight of a great spirit, which goes back to the Emyrean whence it came, we should realise that a great man has done his work, and that what more he may have done could have little contributed to that monument of perfection and utility which is to us, as it was to him, a glory. His brain may have grown less able and his heart become contracted and colder in the winter of age. Now working for his kind, striving with an intellect as strong, and yearning with a heart as bold as in his sanguine youth, he goes away, leaving an unblemished heritage. The treasures which he has created are sanctified by the knowledge that their creator was always faithful to his first grand instincts, and that, never deviating from his mission as an Apostle of the People, he has left for Posterity a benefaction as good and worthy as the world has any count of.

Great as Charles Dickens was as an author, the age which honoured him must share in his glory. If his genius was unique, the spirit which fired him came from and was accepted by the People. If he has written for all Time, he has written for his Age. In this age there was not only the multifiform nature which his master pen depicted in all its beauties, eccentricities, and sadness, but the wide sense of sympathy which was enmeshed with his own. The recognition of Charles Dickens was the recognition of human nature and of

* Reprinted from *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, June 25th, 1870.

the immutable grace belonging to men's better selves. There were periods in English History when the song of this great prose-poet would have found no listeners. Emerson has said: "The poetry of the vulgar has yet to be written." Dickens found that poetry in the hearts of the people, and has done more, save Shakespeare, than any other author to show the whole world is kin. Thackeray portrayed but one class, and became celebrated as a discoverer of the ugly spots in society; Lord Lytton, superb in diction, delicate in sentiment, and surprising in constructive ability, has never humbled himself to become exalted; Carlyle, though a great Historian, is not sufficiently idiomatic in feeling to become a writer for all men; George Eliot, whose marvellous power and nearly supernatural insight into human nature have made her universally famous, perhaps lacks that exuberance of feeling and that sunlight of temperament so conspicuous in her late contemporary. Charles Dickens was great, because he was above reasoning. His was the logic of the heart, which persuaded mankind by a loving kindness, and which taught all manner of good in a sublime language—a worthy echo of that heard on the Mount more than eighteen hundred years ago. The greatest of all Masters of the human heart said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." From little Paul and little Nell came a wisdom better than the Philosophy of the Schools; telling us that in the sweetness and freshness of Childhood were to be found a teaching enkindling Divine Affections, awakening us out of the darkness of sordid calculation to the light of Love and Goodness. The Author of the *Old Curiosity Shop*, of *A Christmas Carol*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*, preached his Gospel of Charity as no other human author had ever preached before. We are grateful to his memory because of all this; because he let us see into his own heart, and because he showed us the springs of excellence in our own. If he ordered his own imagination to people worlds for us, this Chieftain of the Passions commanded our smiles and tears, our contempt, scorn, and pity. He made us love and hate in a breath; and if he revealed to us the "precious jewel" in poor humanity, he exhibited the squalor of golden people and the deformity of mere prosperity. To those having great needs, to the Humble, and to those of little account, he talked in words of unsurpassed tenderness: all mankind he has cheered with his guileless humour and beguiled by his exquisite pathos, finding out loveliness in noisome places, showing light in obscure haunts, and fair pictures in poor homes. His beneficent plans softened the air we breathed, warmed us into forgiving moods, and transmuted mists into sunlight. He has brought us into communion with beings who will never pass out of our lives. The Cherryble Brothers are always coming to us with messages of kindness. Mr. Dombey is reprobating the arrogance of wealth; Steerforth, in the pride and lust of birth and youth, is, amidst the tempest, telling the story of Retribution. Mark Tapley, Sam Weller, and a host of others are old companions who never tire us, and come to solace us when even the companionship of friendship wearies us. Who, having once heard the Music of dear Tom Pinch in his Temple rooms, would wish the grand old organ to cease the sounds of those deep tones which have thrown

a melody into our lives, and given us peace in time of noise and confusion. In *The Chimes*, too, is a harmony full of deep meaning, which should never pass out of hearing.

The "Old Abbey" where lies the dust of England's most illustrious sons, is honoured by becoming the Temple of his remains. Whether his grave be in some quiet churchyard or at Westminster must be of little moment to those who knew him best. There is a fitness in the National Mausoleum in which there is a "Poet's Corner." As nothing now can diminish his fame, nothing can cast a new glory upon his memory. His uncorrupted spirit passes on to a higher sphere; the offspring of that spirit remains with us, relating to us how there lived a great man who used his genius for the good of his fellow-men, and who, striving to advance the public good by unselfish aims, left the world better than he found it, enriching it by his mighty imagination, and ennobling it out of the grandeur of his sacred aspirations.

We need ask no questions, we need make no enquiries about what the world is saying at this great loss. Little Paul asked: "What are the wild waves saying?" The answer has now come for Charles Dickens.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XLII

EVENTIDE:—A mother reading—
Vision dimmed by tears that fall—
To a child whose eyelids glistened,
As he gazed and breathless listened
To the death of Little Paul.

Eventide:—a prescient Leader—
Erst the Pilot of the State,
Weary of the Senate's glory—
Seeking rest in Dora's story,
From the battles of debate.

Eventide:—a village smithy,
On the borders of a wood:—
Listen, how the blacksmith's laughter
Ringeth up to roof and rafter,
As a yeoman's laughter should.

Eventide:—while yet the people
Read his words of great renown,
He was dying, who so moved them,
He who to themselves had proved them,—
Dying as the sun went down.

Eventide:—his brain's grand cordage,
Drifting from his large designs,
Cloven by the Unseen Sabre:—
Hark!—the Requiem of Labour,—
Coming through the solemn pines.

DICKENS'S ASSOCIATION WITH BROADSTAIRS

By B. W. MATZ

PERHAPS the most interesting town outside London associated with the life and writings of Dickens, excepting, of course, Rochester, is Broadstairs. But it is interesting for different reasons from those which make Rochester a famous spot in Dickensland. Although Broadstairs can boast of certain places and scenes made immortal by the novelist in his works, it has more intimate and lasting links with the name of Dickens, for he resided there during the summer or autumn months from 1837 to 1851 almost without a break. Consequently his connection with the town was far more personal, and therefore inspires a greater affection in admirers of Dickens, whose life was as full and as alluring as one of his books.

Dickens had a great affection for the little seaside resort, and this is evidenced in scores of letters he wrote to his friends, and in that charming sketch in *Reprinted Pieces*, entitled "Our English Watering Place." He and his family became almost a part of the place, and the numerous visits to him of his friends Forster, Maclise, Leech, Lemon, Sheriff Gordon, Hans Andersen, Augustus Egg, Marcus Stone, made Broadstairs, in its quiet, primitive period, quite notable, and doubtless did much to make it famously popular, and ultimately spoil it from the novelist's point of view to such an extent as to drive him permanently out of it. Nevertheless, during the period he made it his holiday resort, he became associated with it so intimately that the history of the little town during those years is centred round him, and when he left, the impression of his cheerful spirits and friendly nature remained there, and were for years after memorialised by the inhabitants who were fortunate in being contemporary with that period.

Broadstairs was a small and quiet little spot when Dickens and his wife first visited it in the autumn of 1837. He took lodgings at No. 12 (now 31), High Street, a small but respectable little house, and occupied rooms on the first floor. He had nearly finished his immortal *Pickwick* at the time, and it was in this house that part 18 was written. The house exists to-day, but with a shop front added to it, and it is to be sincerely hoped that the widening of the High Street, which has already begun, will not necessitate the demolishing of this historic building, for every house wherein any portion of *Pickwick* was written is historic. On September 3rd, 1837, he wrote from here to Forster, "I am much better, and hope to begin *Pickwick* No. 18 to-morrow. . . . I have discovered that the landlord of the Albion has delicious hollands (but what is that to *you*, for you cannot sympathise with my feelings), and that a cobbler who lives opposite to my bedroom window is a Roman Catholic, and gives an hour and a half to his devotions every morning behind his counter. I have walked upon the sands at low water from this place to Ramsgate, and sat upon the same at high ditto till I have been plagued with the cold."

Last year, whilst I was staying in Broadstairs, I came across an old inhabitant who remembered that cobbler and confirmed the incident of his devotions. During this visit Dickens became a subscriber to the Royal Kent Library, which was attached to the Assembly Rooms at the time, and again during his visit in 1840. This library does not exist to-day, but I am able to reproduce, by the courtesy of Mr. Hale, who has the old account books, facsimiles of the two entries from the subscribers' book, showing



12 (NOW 31) HIGH STREET

[Photo by Swaine

Dickens's signature; and these facts will, I think, settle the question over which there has been much doubt as to which was the library Dickens referred to in "Our English Watering Place." In it he says, "Attached to our Assembly Rooms is a library. . . . The leaves of the romances, reduced to a condition very like curl-paper, are thickly studded with notes in pencil: sometimes complimentary, sometimes jocose. . . . Miss Julia Mills" (*Copperfield* had been out about a year when this was written) "has read the whole collection of these books. She has left marginal notes on the pages, as 'Is not this truly touching?—J.M.' 'How thrilling!—J.M.',"

In the autumn of 1839 Dickens took up his residence at No. 40, Albion Street, where he wrote the concluding chapters of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Albion Street was also often referred to as "The Terrace," as the backs of the houses were in the street, and the fronts facing the sea—or the Terrace.

Writing to Forster from this address, he said, "It has been

25	Mrs. Rogers	10	1
8	Mr. Wm. S. Mayhew & Co.	10	3
	Mr. Wm. Charles Dickens	10	6
	Mr. G. Brown & Co.	10	2
	Mr. L. Simpson	10	6

EXTRACT FROM ROYAL KENT LIBRARY SUBSCRIPTION BOOK, 1837

blowing great guns for the last three days, and last night (I wish you could have seen it) there was such a sea! I staggered down to the pier, and creeping under the lee of a large boat which was high and dry, watched it breaking for nearly an hour. Of course I came back wet through." In 1840 he was again at Broadstairs, and from the above address wrote to Forster in June

ROYAL KENT LIBRARY

* Family Subscription, Double Subscription, Single Subscription.

	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	
One Week	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Two Weeks	0	9	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	0
One Month	0	14	0	0	10	0	0	0	6	0
Two Months	1	1	0	0	14	0	0	0	10	0
Three Months	1	8	0	1	1	0	0	0	14	0
Six Months	2	2	0	1	10	0	1	0	1	0
One Year	2	12	0	1	17	0	1	5	0	0

* Each Subscriber to have Two Books, and a Family Six Books, which they may change once a day, and not otherwise.

1840
Sept. 2 Mr. John Ker
Mr. Charles Dickens
Mr. L. Simpson

10 - 2
10 - 11
10 - 11

EXTRACT FROM SUBSCRIPTION BOOK, 1840

about No. 15 of "Master Humphrey's Clock," in which was appearing *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Writing from the same address to Maclise, he says:—

"My foot is in the house, my bath is on the sea,
And, before I take a souse, here's a single note to thee.

"I merely say that the sea is in an extraordinary state of

sublimity; that this place is, as the guide-book most justly observes, 'Unsurpassed for the salubrity of the refreshing breezes, which are wafted on the ocean's pinions from far-distant shores.' . . . That the sea is rolling away in front of the window at which I indite this epistle, and that everything is as fresh and glorious as fine weather and a splendid coast can make it. . . . Come to the bower which is shaded for you in the one-pair front, where no chair or table has four legs of the same length, and where no drawers will open until you have pulled the legs off, and then they keep open and won't shut again. Come!"

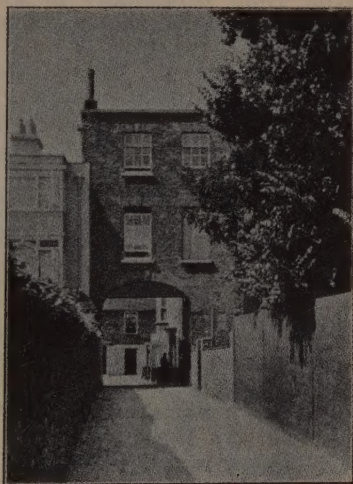
This house was afterwards added to the hotel (which was then known as Ballard's), and Dickens, staying in the same rooms in 1849 and 1859, remarks that these alterations had been made.

In September he had a wish to reside at Fort House, which he described as standing prominently at the top of a breezy hill on the road to Kingsgate, with a cornfield between it and the sea; but he was fain to be content, as yet, with Lawn House, a smaller house between the hill and the cornfield. From here he wrote to Forster, "I have a notion of the dreadful silence down here, and of the stars shining down upon their drowned eyes—the fruit, let me tell you, of a solitary walk by starlight on the cliffs."

From Lawn House, August 16th, 1841, he writes again to Forster, "The tide is in, and the fishing boats are dancing like mad. Upon the green-topped cliffs the corn is cut and piled in shocks; and thousands of butterflies are fluttering about, taking the bright little red flags at the mast heads for flowers, and panting with delight accordingly.

(Here the inimitable, unable to resist the brilliancy out of doors, breaketh off, rusheth to the machines, and plungeth into the sea. Returning he proceedeth.)"

He was busy on *Barnaby Rudge* at the time, and many instructions to Cattermole for illustrations were sent from Lawn House. It was during this visit that he decided upon his first visit to America, and wrote of his intention to Forster. Returning from America, he took up his abode again in Broadstairs in the autumn of 1842, in Albion Street, and commenced the writing of his *American Notes*. In a letter to Forster he tells him he was "At the Isle of Thanet Races yesterday! I saw—oh! who shall say what an immense amount of character in the way of inconceivable villainy and blackguardism. I even got some new wrinkles in the



LAWN HOUSE

[Photo by T. W. Tyrrell]

way of showmen, conjurers, pea-and-thimblers, and trampers generally." And again on the 7th August, "I have been reading Tennyson all this morning on the sea shore. Among other trifling effects, the waters have dried up as they did of old, and shown me all the mermen and mermaids, at the bottom of the ocean; together with millions of queer creatures, half-fish and half-fungus, looking down into all manner of coral caves and seaweed conservatories, and staring in with great dull eyes at every open nook and loop-hole." In another letter he described a visit to the Margate theatre, and at the end of September he writes: "The sea is running so high that we have no choice but to return by land. . . . We cannot open a window, or a door; legs are of no use on the terrace, and the Margate boats can only take people aboard at Herne Bay."

On the 1st September, 1843, he wrote a long and characteristic letter from Broadstairs to Professor Felton in America, which gives a delightful picture of his favourite watering-place and his life there:—

"This is a little fishing-place; intensely quiet; built on a cliff, whereon—in the centre of a tiny semicircular bay—our house stands; the sea rolling and dashing under the windows. Seven miles out are the Goodwin Sands (you've heard of the Goodwin Sands?) whence floating lights perpetually wink after dark, as if they were carrying on intrigues with the servants. Also there is a big lighthouse called the North Foreland on a hill behind the village, a severe parsonic light, which reproves the young and giddy floaters, and stares grimly out upon the sea. Under the cliff are rare good sands, where all the children assemble every morning and throw up impossible fortifications, which the sea throws down again at high water. Old gentlemen and ancient ladies flirt after their own manner in two reading-rooms and on a great many scattered seats in the open air. Other old gentlemen look all day through telescopes and never see anything. In a bay-window in a one-pair sits, from nine o'clock to one, a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. His name is Boz. At one he disappears, and presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen—a kind of salmon-coloured porpoise—splashing about in the ocean. After that he may be seen in another bay-window on the ground-floor, eating a strong lunch; after that, walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book. Nobody bothers him unless they know he is disposed to be talked to; and I am told he is very comfortable indeed. He's as brown as a berry, and they *do* say is a small fortune to the innkeeper who sells beer and cold punch. But this is mere rumour. Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles or so, away), and then I am told there is a sound in Lincoln's Inn Fields at night, as of men laughing, together with a clinking of knives and forks and wine-glasses."

In 1844 and 1846 he spent his holiday in Switzerland, but in 1845 we find him with his family again at Broadstairs, this time

at the Albion Hotel. In 1847 he made Broadstairs his headquarters from the early summer to the end of October, at, it is believed, either No. 1 or No. 6, Chandos Place. "I am looking out upon a dark grey sea, with a keen north-east wind blowing it in shore," he writes on the 2nd July to Miss Power. "It is more like late autumn than midsummer, and there is howling in the air as if the latter were in a very hopeless state indeed. There are no visitors in the place but children, and they (my own included) have all got the whooping-cough, and go about the beach choking incessantly. A miserable wanderer lectured in a library last night about astronomy; but being in utter solitude he snuffed out the transparent planets he had brought with him in a box and fled in disgust. A white mouse and a little tinkling box of music that stops at 'come' in the melody of the Buffalo Gals, and can't play 'out to-night,' are the only amusements left." And in a later one, "Some wild beasts (in cages) have come down here and evolved us in a whirl of dissipation. A young lady in complete armour—at least, in something that shines very much, and is exceedingly scaly—goes into the den of the ferocious lions, tigers, leopards, &c., and pretends to go to sleep upon the principal lion, upon which a rustic keeper, who speaks through his nose, exclaims, 'Behold the abazid power of woo-bad!' and we all applaud tumultuously."



CHANDOS PLACE

[Photo by T. W. Tyrrell]

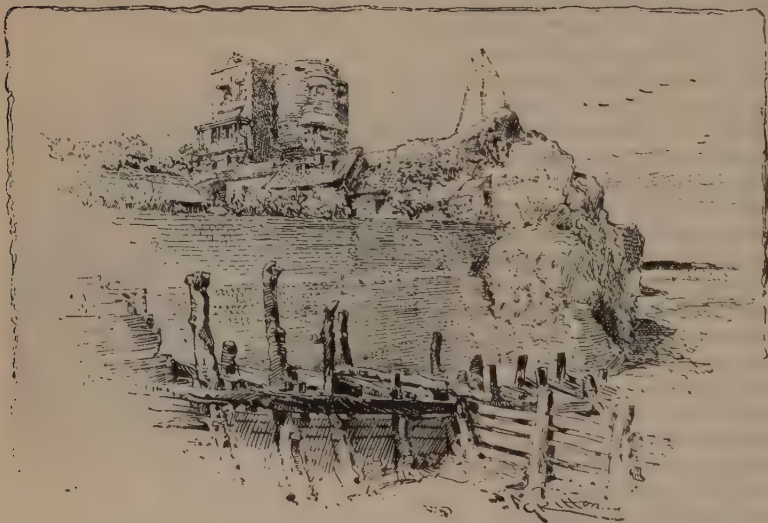
On 5th September he writes to Forster, "A sea fog here which prevents one's seeing the low-water mark. A circus on the cliff to the right, and of course I have a box to-night! Deep slowness in the inimitable's brain. A shipwreck on the Goodwin Sands last Sunday. . . ."

At this time Dickens had begun to find it very difficult to write at Broadstairs owing to the great noise in the streets. He wrote to Forster, "Vagrant music is getting to that height here, and is so impossible to be escaped from, that I fear Broadstairs and I must part company in time to come. Unless it pours with rain I cannot write half an hour without the most excruciating organs, fiddles, bells or glee singers. There is a violin of the most tormenting kind under the window now (time ten in the morning) and an Italian box of music on the steps—both in full blast."

But in spite of these inconveniences he was again in Broadstairs in the autumn of 1848, this time at one of the Chandos Place

houses, where he wrote *The Haunted Man*. Forster tells us this was really a summer holiday, with little else to do than the Christmas story. But Dickens's bright and restless spirits did not allow him to be lazy even in his idleness. Bad weather was no deterrent, and he records having got wet through three times in a single day and spending his time in all sorts of ways, such as hunting out the curious things among the rocks which the rains brought out. "We are reasonably jolly, but rurally so; going to bed o' nights at ten, and bathing o' mornings at half-past seven; and not drugging ourselves with those dirty and spoiled waters of Lethe, that flow round the base of the great pyramid."

In the summer of 1849 Dickens and his family were at Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, but one of his daughters not being well,



FORT HOUSE

From a drawing by F. G. Kitton

he returned with his family again to the Albion Hotel, at Broadstairs, to be braced up after the relaxing air of the Isle of Wight undercliff.

In a letter from here he writes to Forster, "Such a night and day of rain I should think the oldest inhabitant never saw! and yet in the old familiar Broadstairs I somehow or other don't mind it much. . . . As for news, you might as well ask me for dolphins. Nobody in Broadstairs—to speak of. Certainly nobody at Ballard's. We are in the part, which is the house next door to the hotel itself, that we once had for three years running, and just as quiet and snug now as it was then."

In July, 1850, however, he succeeded for the first time in securing possession of Fort House, Broadstairs, on which he had always set his affections, and occupied it for two seasons. It was

here that he finished *David Copperfield*, composed portions of *A Child's History of England*, and wrote, of course, that charming and faithful sketch of the town, "Our English Watering Place," and other contributions for "Household Words."

Fort House is the most prominent Dickens landmark in the town, although the novelist only lived in it for the two seasons of 1850-51. The street music flung him into fevers of irritation, and he finally decided that he could not possibly do serious work there any more. Consequently in October, 1851, he gave up residing in the little seaside town, although he visited it again in 1859.

But this house is the most interesting of all, as it is also the one most intimately connected with his home life there. The pleasant grounds attached to it were the scene of many happy family gatherings, and the house the centre for many jovial meetings with his friends. Writing to Forster on the 1st June he says: "It is more

delightful here than I can express. Corn growing, larks singing, garden full of flowers, fresh air on the sea—O it is wonderful!" and on the 8th July he sent a pressing invitation to the Earl of Carlisle, "We shall be delighted to see you . . . and we can give you a bed that may be surpassed, with a welcome that certainly cannot be. The general character of Broadstairs as to size and ac-



FORT HOUSE: THE ROOM INTO WHICH THE
LIGHTHOUSE SHINES

[Photo by F. W. Robinson

commodation was happily expressed by Miss Eden, when she wrote to the Duke of Devonshire (as he told me) saying how grateful she felt to a certain sailor, who asked leave to see her garden, for not plucking it bodily up and sticking it in his button hole. . . You will have for a night-light in the room we shall give you the North Foreland lighthouse. That and the sea and the air are our lions. It is a very rough little place, but a very pleasant one, and you will make it pleasanter than ever for me."

In another letter to Forster, he tells of an amusing incident which had recently occurred in the town: "Fancy the Preventive men finding a lot of brandy in barrels on the rocks here the day before yesterday! Nobody knows anything about the barrels, of course. They were intended to have been landed with the next tide, and

to have been just covered over at low water. But the water being unusually low, the tops of the barrels became revealed to Preventive telescopes, and descent was made upon the brandy. They are always at it, hereabouts, I have no doubt."

He relates another incident to Henry Austin on 8th September: "A great to do here. A steamer lost on the Goodwins yesterday, and our men bringing in no end of dead cattle and sheep. I stood a supper to them last night, to the unbounded gratification of Broadstairs. They came in from the wreck very wet and tired, and very much disconcerted by the nature of their prize. . . . One lean-faced boatman murmured, when they were all ruminative over the bodies as they lay on the pier: 'Couldn't sassaages be made on it?' but retired in confusion shortly afterwards, overwhelmed by the execrations of the bystanders."



FORT HOUSE: DICKENS'S BEDROOM

(Photo by F. W. Robinson)

Forster joined him this August for the regatta, and stayed a pleasant fortnight. Dickens's article, "Our English Watering Place," appeared whilst he was there, and he tells us it created great local excitement. This was Dickens's last stay at Broadstairs. He returned, however, in 1859 on a brief visit, to which I refer later, but he never lost his affection for the delightful little watering-

place. How charmed and fond he was of it is shown by all these references to it in his letters. He seemed always delighted to talk about it, and to sing its praises so much that there is a sort of personal relationship between him and it. After leaving Fort House for good he commenced his new story, *Bleak House*, and the next tenant of Fort House re-christened it "Bleak House," apparently in celebration of the new book; a laudable enough idea, but one that has been most confusing. The Bleak House of the book with that name, as everyone knows, was situated in St. Albans, and Fort House has nothing whatever to do with it, nor was a line of it written there. But "Bleak House" it is called to-day, and "Bleak House" it will remain and continue to confuse.

I had the privilege of going over it last summer, through the courtesy of Mr. Thomas Barry, himself a keen lover of the novelist and his works. As everyone knows, he has added a wing to the building, and made the whole of the exterior of a uniform Tudor

style. But the interior of the building inhabited by Dickens has not been altered in the slightest way. All the woodwork, balusters, stairs, fire-places, everything, indeed, as it was in Dickens's days is retained, and retained with no little pride and satisfaction by Mr. Barry. Even the verandah which was a prominent feature outside the windows over the first doorway has been zealously preserved as a summer house in his charming gardens. The format of the gardens, too, has been kept as it was, for although, as Mr. Barry told me, the pathways were over-grown with weeds to such an extent when he went there as to make them almost impossible to find, he was able by diligence to discover them and to relay them as they were in the days when the novelist used to amuse and entertain his children there.

Mr. Barry personally conducted me over the house and pointed out everything of interest. The dado on one of the staircases, painted by one of the novelist's daughters (probably Kate, who is now Mrs. Perugini) is preserved as a priceless relic of the association of the novelist's tenancy. Dickens's study is, of course, the literary sanctum of the house, and is hung with portraits, and pictures relating to the novelist.



FORT HOUSE: DICKENS'S STUDY

[Photo by F. W. Robinson]

An excellent portrait of the novelist, after Watkins' famous photograph, confronts you as you enter. On another wall is Frith's original Dolly Varden picture, which was sold at the Dickens sale for £1,000. Close by is a pen-and-ink sketch of the head and shoulders of the novelist, surrounded by scenes and characters of his works drawn by J. Reading, an etching of the original Fort House, and other Dickensian pictures. To sit here for a few minutes one can picture the scene as depicted by the novelist in that delightful sketch of the town, "Our English Watering Place." There immediately below is the sea, to the right the pier, and the bay with the Goodwin sands in the distance. The Assembly Rooms and Betsey Trotwood's house can be easily discerned on the sea front. Upstairs is the charmingly situated bedroom occupied by Dickens, and near by the one offered to the Earl of Carlisle, who was promised the North Foreland lighthouse for a night-light, which to-day serves the same purpose. From the roof of the added wing, one of the most charming views one could wish for, is to be seen.

Even the breakfast room, kitchen and cellars have been left as they were, and Mr. Barry has a distinct pleasure in assuring you that the key to the latter is the one Dickens himself used.

Mr. Barry's pride in owning so famous a house is apparent, not only in everything he says, but in every room in the house, whether in the new part or the old. In the new billiard-room, for instance, is a striking bust of the novelist modelled especially for him, and portraits are to be seen in the hall, drawing-room, &c., whilst every passer-by will see the portrait medallion let into the wall of the exterior that all who run that way may read and see for themselves that here the great novelist lived and wrote.

It is a pleasure to make these statements, for it has got about that Mr. Barry has desecrated a notable Dickens shrine mercifully; whereas, whilst improving the residence for his own convenience and comfort, he has retained that part of it which was the

novelist's as a real literary landmark. Mr. Barry is the President of the Isle of Thanet Branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

As we have noted, Dickens wrote a great deal of *David Copperfield* at Broadstairs, and it was here that the original of Betsey Trotwood lived. Her name was Mary Strong, and she lived in a double-fronted house on Nuckell's Place, fronting the sea. The house stands to-day, and is



FORT HOUSE: THE GARDENS

[Photo by F. W. Robinson

named Dickens House, although the green sward which ran from it to the cliff is now laid out in gardens and promenade. In 1849, however, the top of the cliff was just meadow land, as was the front of Betsey Trotwood's house, which Dickens located at Dover, from which she forcibly drove away the donkeys.

Miss Strong was evidently another such a character as Betsey Trotwood, and had the same strong feeling regarding the trespassing of donkeys and their boy drivers, for she used to ack them vigorously with a hearth broom, as did Betsey.

In making this statement about Betsey Trotwood and the donkeys, one is reminded of a sentence in "Our English Watering Place." "Whenever you come here, and see harnessed donkeys eating clover out of barrows drawn across a narrow thoroughfare, you may be quite sure you are in our High Street." But Miss Strong evidently was not otherwise unkind to children, for Charles Dickens, the younger, has related how he used to be invited to Miss Strong's house to tea, and enjoyed the good things she pro-

vided. But he, too, was treated in the same way that others were if he dared to trespass on her domain in the company of donkeys. She seemed to be fond of children's company, for there are those in the town who remember, as children, the delightful tea parties she used to give, and the great pride with which she showed them the collection of shells and corals brought home to her by a seafaring relative. She is buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's.

Another notable Dickens house in the town is that called the Assembly Rooms in "Our English Watering Place." This is to-day used as the Broadstairs club, and stands, as it did when Dickens was writing about it, in Nuckell's Place, a few doors from Betsey Trotwood's House. Here the subscription balls took place, with which the name of the Honourable Miss Peepy, the beauty of the day, was proudly associated. The other notable events also took place in these rooms, such as the annual sale of "fancy and other china," which nobody bought, and which was brought out every year for some unaccountable reason; the entertainments of the "misguided wanderer of a ventriloquist, or an infant phenomenon, or a juggler, or somebody with an orrery that is several stars behind the time." Attached to the Assembly

Rooms was a library, where "a large doll, with movable eyes, was put up to be raffled for, by five-and-twenty members at two shillings, seven years ago this autumn, and the list is not full yet." This library doubtless was the Royal Kent Library, to which Dickens subscribed in 1837 and 1840. The owner of it at the time was a Mr. Barfield, who wore knee-breeches as described by Dickens.

Broadstairs has altered a good deal since the year 1851, in which "Our English Watering Place" was written, but the general description of the place is true to-day. The pier is "a queer old wooden pier, fortunately without the slightest pretensions to architecture, and very picturesque in consequence" still, and what Dickens said of the boatmen is probably also true to-day, even to their enthusiasm for pitch.

Dickens was very friendly with the boatmen, and he used to chat with them at the old look-out house. One old salt a few years ago gave some reminiscences of some of those chats.



NUCKELL'S PLACE, SHOWING (1) ASSEMBLY ROOMS
(2) BETSEY TROTWOOD'S HOUSE

[Photo by Miss J. Rickett]

But there are many things about Broadstairs which Dickens liked, and we can only refer our readers to that delightful essay to learn all that he had to say and to fully appreciate the charming way he said it. Some things may have changed, but the sea front and shore which attracted him so is as charming as then.

"We have a fine sea, wholesome for all people, profitable for the body, profitable for the mind. . . . The boats are dancing on the bubbling water; the colliers are afloat again; the white-bordered waves rush in; the children 'Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him, when he comes back; the radiant sails are gliding past the shore, and shining on the far horizon; all the sea is sparkling, heaving, swelling up with life and beauty, this bright morning.'"



ASSEMBLY ROOMS: INTERIOR

(Photo by F. W. Robinson)

Dickens's last visit to Broadstairs was in 1859, and he writes from the Albion to his daughters Mammie and Katie, "I have been 'moved' here, and am now (Ballard having added to the hotel a house we lived in three years) in our old dining-room and sitting-room, and our old drawing-room as a bedroom. My cold is so bad, both in my throat and in my chest, that I can't bathe in the sea;

Tom Collin dissuaded me—thought it 'bad'—but I get a heavy shower-bath at Mrs. Crampton's every morning. The baths are still hers and her husband's, but they have retired and live in 'Nuckell's'—are going to give a stained-glass window, value three hundred pounds, to St. Peter's Church. Tom Collin is of opinion that the Miss Dickenses has growned two fine young women—leastwise asking pardon, ladies."

Ballard's, now the Albion Hotel, as we have shown, was a favourite resort of the novelist. It was a small hotel in those days, and its quiet and respectable tone appealed to him greatly, as it did to many who made it their headquarters.

In the dining-room is the original of a letter of the novelist, which describes Broadstairs in these words: "A good sea—fresh breezes—fine sands—and pleasant walks—with all manner of fishing boats, lighthouses, piers, bathing machines, are its only attractions, but it is one of the freshest and freest little places in the world." And that is the opinion to-day.

DICKENS'S FELICITY OF SPEECH

By the REV. W. A. C. CHEVALIER.

THAT Dickens was fond of the stage, and was the friend of actors, is a well-known fact. His friendship with W. C. Macready, the tragedian, and Charles Fechter, the celebrated French actor, by whom he was presented with the famous ch  let that stood in the grounds of Gadshill, is on record in the pages of Forster. It will also be remembered that it was Dickens who foresaw and foretold the brilliant career of Henry Irving at a time when the young actor was then unknown to fame.

It was in the year 1858 that Dickens, together with Thackeray, was associated with another great actor with a great name—Charles Kean—in the inauguration of a scheme for the foundation of a Dramatic College at a meeting in the old “Princess’s Theatre.” To this meeting only a slight allusion is made by Forster, who refers to it in a few words amongst other engagements of Dickens at the time. He says nothing of the remarkable speech which Dickens made on the occasion. As I had the privilege of being present and heard it, I thought that perhaps my recollections might be of some interest to the readers of *The Dickensian*. The stage was the platform for the speakers, and the theatre was crowded with a distinguished audience representative of all that was best and most famous in literature and arts. Kean was chairman, and referred, I remember, in an able speech to William Alleyne, the actor and friend of Shakespeare, as the founder of Dulwich College, and to the claims of the dramatic profession for public consideration. It is, however, to the speech of Charles Dickens that I wish to direct attention in this little article as a specimen of his peculiarly felicitous treatment of a congenial theme, showing that he was indeed in the art of speaking as in that of writing “The Inimitable.”

Referring to the gift of freehold land for the site of the college, Dickens said in the course of his speech: “As it is far too often forgotten by those who are indebted to the dramatic art for many a restorative flight out of this work-a-day world—that the silks and velvets and elegant costumes of its professors must be every night exchanged for the hideous coats and waistcoats of the present day, in which we have now the honour and the misfortune of appearing before you—so when we do meet with a nature so considerably generous as this donor’s, and do find an interest in the life and struggles of the people who have delighted us, we have no duty left but to take the goods the gods provide us, and to make the best and the most of them.” This was quite characteristic of Dickens, and showed him in his usual happy vein—on such a subject—but there was another passage in the same speech which was even more Dickensian, manifesting that peculiar vein of humour and descriptive perspicuity that marked his writings. “I could not but reflect,” he continued, “as Mr. Kean was speaking, that in an hour or so from this time the spot upon which we are now assembled will be transformed into the scene of a

crafty and cruel bond. I know that a few hours hence the Grand Canal of Venice will flow with picturesque fidelity on the very spot on which I now stand dry shod, and that the 'quality of mercy' will be beautifully set before the Venetian Senate by a learned young doctor from Padua on these very boards on which we now enlarge upon the quality of charity and sympathy—knowing this, it came into my mind to consider how different the real bond of to-day from the ideal bond of to-night. Now, all generosity and forbearance, all forgetfulness of petty jealousies and unworthy divisions, all united action for the general good. Then, all selfishness, all malignity, all revenge and evil. Then, a bond to be broken within the compass of a few hours—now, a bond to be valid and good for generations hence. Of the execution and delivery of this bond between this generous gentleman on the one hand and the united members of a too often and too long disunited art upon the other, be you, ladies and gentlemen, the witnesses. Do you attest of everything that is liberal and free in spirit that it is 'so nominated in the bond,' and of everything that is grudging, self-seeking, unjust or unfair, that it is by no sophistry ever to be found there." The words themselves in their perspicacity and picturesqueness are effective enough, but aided as they were by the force and expression of the speaker—and by his strong personality—the effect was like a spell. But the scheme failed for all that, and the asylum, which in the wisdom and sympathy of such men as Thackeray, Kean, and Dickens, was thought to be desirable for superannuated actors and actresses, did not find favour with the members of the profession. Admirable as the idea was, it did not take cognizance of the fact that after a life of excitement such as that of the actor—in an environment so full of public and social pleasures and pursuits—the reaction to a life of comparative isolation from society, however peaceful, would be too great to be enjoyable or even tolerable.

Thus it seems that there was something like prophetic foresight in one passage of Dickens's speech that afternoon, probably unnoticed at the time, but which received singular fulfilment soon after by the unexpected action taken by the donor of the land, whose gift in consequence of that action was rejected by the committee. The words are, "Do you attest to everything that is liberal and free in spirit—that it is so nominated in the bond." The concluding sentence, "And of everything that is grudging, self-seeking, &c.," seems to anticipate the action of the donor of the land by whose sophistry the gift was made ungracious, fulfilling the poet's words, "Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind."

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

- June 8.—Forest Gate Branch: Excursion to Rochester, &c.
 „ 12.—Shrewsbury Branch: Annual Children's Outing.
 „ 20.—Excursion to Broadstairs—Unveiling of Dickens Memorial Tablets. Leave Victoria (S.E. & C.R.) 7.10 a.m. Tickets (inclusive), 8s. 6d. See "When Found—."

A DICKENS WEEK AT KENNINGTON THEATRE

WE have pleasure in announcing that arrangements have been made whereby, under the direction of Messrs. A. E. Brookes Cross and Walter Dexter, a dramatic version of "The Old Curiosity Shop" will be played at the Kennington Theatre during the week commencing June 8th next (Whit Week), nightly at 7.45, with a matinée on the Bank Holiday at two o'clock.

We hope that not only every London member of the Fellowship will find time to look in at the theatre during the week, but that country members, who may be in town during the holidays, will make a point of visiting Mr. Robert Arthur's comfortable playhouse, which is very centrally situated, and is within a few minutes of Westminster.

The high standard of excellence that was reached in the recent production of "Dolly Varden" should be a sufficient guarantee that these performances will not only be true to the Dickensian spirit, but attractive also to the ordinary playgoer; indeed, in the dramatic version of the novel in question there are, without a doubt, the best examples of what Dickens wrote that made for laughter and for tears.

Mr. Frank Staff, whose successes as Toots in the "House of Dombey," and Sim Tappertit in "Dolly Varden," are fresh in the minds of those who witnessed these performances, will play Dick Swiveller. Mr. A. E. Brookes Cross will repeat his wonderfully life-like performance of Sampson Brass; Mrs. W. Teignmouth Shore, her admirable impersonation of the Marchioness; and Miss Kathleen Marriott, who touched all hearts by her pathetic rendering of the part on the last occasion, will again play Little Nell; Miss H. Pearl Humphrey and Miss May Daniel will be Mrs. Quilp and Sally Brass respectively, and Quilp will be in the experienced hands of Mr. F. T. Harry.

The play will be preceded by a one-act piece, "Dolly Varden," by Mr. Walter Dexter.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I didn't know, and now I do know, and that shows the advantage of asking, don't it?"—ROSA DARTLE.

QUESTIONS

ENGLISHMAN'S PREDILECTION FOR A GOOD DINNER.—I have read in a Bengali book of importance that Dickens, expatiating upon the Englishman's special predilection for a good dinner, relates the story of a man who, being invited to a meal, was in such a hurry to taste it that he overturned the equipage, and rolled in the street through furious driving. In what novel of Dickens does this character appear? What are the details of the incident?—B. R. LAHIRI, Professor, Bangabasi College, Calcutta.

THE HORSE A CAUSE OF VICE.—Can some reader refer me to the passage in Dickens's works in which he comments on the curious fact that the horse, one of the noblest of animals, should be the cause of so much vice in man?—F. G. JACKSON.

ANSWERS

POEM FOUND.—The lines referred to in the April *Dickensian* about the "unfinished window" are the last in Longfellow's poem on "Hawthorne," May 23rd, 1864—

"Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain."

The date is that of Hawthorne's burial; the poem was written a month later. I presume some admirer of Dickens applied the phrase to him.—
V. RENDALL.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EDWIN DROOD: A CORRECTION

SIR,—You are certainly wise in placing a temporary lid over the Drood controversy; but I beg a line or two in which to say that in my modest contribution to the question in the April number I meant to write, "For the half-crazed and fearful *Jasper*" (not "Drood"). Of course the latter is nonsense.

I am yours truly,

J. C. L. CLARK.

Lancaster, Mass., U.S.A.

DICKENS AND THE DANGER SIGNAL

SIR,—Referring to some inquiries that have been made lately (including one in the April *Dickensian*) concerning Dickens's allusion to railroad signalling, I wish to say that it seems to me that the novelist was not in error. The system in vogue at the time that *Our Mutual Friend* was written was probably hand-control lock-switches, working models of which were exhibited by English firms at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876. At that time American railroad signalling was crude, and the elaborate methods of the English railways attracted considerable attention. In these earlier systems, as in all later ones, the red light blocks the track, but the arrangement may easily be such that the "block" is shown before the train stops, because it comes into the zone of action of the signal before reaching the exact station-point. At a railway station in this city at which I frequently wait I see this action always. The engine has to be drawn ahead in order to bring the passenger coaches within the limits of the station platform. The red light is shown as soon as the first wheels of the train pass beyond the upper end of the station platform. Even closer action is needed when the stopping point is on a sharp curve. Dickens evidently intended to indicate that the train was about to leave, *not stop*, at the station, for he says (Book III., c. IX.) that "they had to run for it." In those days of hand-brakes stops required considerable trackway. There is still, however, a slight difficulty, since unless there was a sharp curve at the station the travellers could not see the light, as it shows *down* the line, not laterally.

HENRY LEFFMANN.

Philadelphia, April, 1908.

OVER THE WATER TO CHARLIE

SIR,—As Mr. K. White wants an explanation, will you allow me to remark that there are some worthy people in the world altogether *minus* of what I once heard Henry Ward Beecher describe, in a Brooklyn ser-

mon, as "spiritual discernment." "Just imagine," said the preacher, "having to explain a joke!"

There is one point somewhat obscure perhaps in the provincial paragraph quoted—the reference to *Master Humphrey's Clock*. I fully appreciate the temptation so alluringly presenting itself to that editor; but surely, dear sir, the line should be drawn hereabouts, and secretarial names should be always respected. *Mr. Arthur Humphreys*, if you please, of Manchester. Not as a mere man-jester myself, being of the suffragette persuasion.

Yours obediently,

E. LUCY DAYSHON.

May 15th, 1908.

Re JOE GARGER'S FORGE

SIR,—While Mr. Philip is quite right in saying that there is no forge at Cooling, he might have gone further and said that the place which was the forge in Dickens's time still stands, and is still known to the older inhabitants as "The Forge," although it is now simply a cottage, or a short row of cottages.

Yours faithfully,

H. SNOWDEN WARD.

Hadlow, Kent, May 13th, 1908.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

NOTICE TO SECRETARIES.

Reports of meetings should reach the Editor by the 18th of each month to ensure insertion. But it will be a matter of GREAT CONVENIENCE if Secretaries will send their reports immediately after the meetings have been held, and not wait until the time limit. Address c/o Publishers.

CHARITABLE AND NEEDLWORK GUILD.—A most enjoyable dance was given in connection with the Guild on April 30th, at St. Bride's Institute. The hall was not overcrowded, and a very pleasant time was experienced by all those present in consequence.

BRIGHTON.—The Branch held its concluding meeting of the season on May 2nd, at Steine House, where the entertainment was provided and arranged by the ladies of the Branch. Very pleasing selections from *Reprinted Pieces*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *Great Expectations* were given by Miss Hilda McNae, Miss May Summer, and Miss Mabel Harbour. Miss Russell Davies was very effective in a selection from *Nicholas Nickleby*, as was also Miss Goring, who chose her recitation from *A Tale of Two Cities*. Miss Alice Halsey completed an excellent programme with a selection from *David Copperfield*, given with her usual charm and ability. Miss Florence Donovan rendered a couple of songs and an encore, whilst during the evening the further hospitality of the hostesses was evinced by the supply of light refreshments.

BRIXTON.—On Monday, April 27th, at the Ladies' Parlour, Brixton Independent Church, a very satisfactory engagement was fulfilled in the interest of this Branch of the Fellowship. The chair was occupied by Mr. Sidney Marriott, and the evening was devoted to a descriptive reading from *Domby and Son*, admirably rendered by the Rev. A. Thurston Pain. The selections were chiefly matrimonial, as being relative to the

three weddings narrated in the closing chapters of the tale, viz., the nuptials of Florence and Walter, Cornelia Blimber and Mr. Feeder, B.A., and, lastly, the marriage of Captain Bunsby to the redoubtable Mrs. MacStinger. Two songs were given during the evening by Miss Searle—"Peace and Rest" and "Carnival"—which were much enjoyed. On Monday, May 11th, at the Lecture Hall of the above-named church, the Annual Conversazione was held. Mr. Sidney Marriott was in the chair, supported by a galaxy of Dickensian talent. Miss Cobledick, who ably presided at the piano, commenced the evening's entertainment by a brilliant instrumental solo. This was followed by ten items of reading, recitations, and songs, all of which were fully appreciated. Miss Sherlock, Mrs. A. Beard, and Mr. George Brown successfully contributed to the musical department—the humorous efforts of the last-named artiste being specially enjoyed—and the literary portion of the programme was well sustained by Mr. R. Allbutt (reading from *Little Dorrit*), Mrs. Arthur Hoare (recital from *David Copperfield*), and Mr. W. J. Douglas (recitals from *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Pickwick*). Coffee and light refreshments were served during the evening.

DUBLIN.—This Branch closed a most successful first session with a public meeting in the Sackville Café on May 7th, when the President (Sir Charles A. Cameron, C.B.), who occupied the chair, delivered one of his characteristically delightful speeches to a large gathering of members and friends, in the course of which he complimented his audience on the success which the branch has achieved during its initial session and the excellent social and charitable work it had accomplished. The hon. secretary (Mr. Geo. A. Prescott), in reviewing the progress of the branch since its inauguration last July, referred to the enthusiastic support of Sir Charles Cameron as president, and expressed in a neatly turned speech the thanks of the members generally for the admirable manner in which he has invariably studied the interests of the Society in Dublin and sought to promote its welfare. An excellent programme of readings from Dickens, interspersed with musical items, was proceeded with. Miss Hogg read the quarrel between Mesdames Gamp and Prig, and Mr. Swaine a selection from *Sketches by Boz*. Mr. N. D. Collins gave "Copperfield and the Waiter," and Mr. W. H. Huizer the scene of Mr. Bumble's courtship.

HAMILTON.—The first monthly meeting of this newly formed Canadian Branch was held on March 19th, in the Recital Hall of the Conservatory of Music, and a continuance of the enthusiasm manifested at the organisation meeting was shown by an attendance of over two hundred. Mr. C. W. Bell, the president, was in the chair, and a delightful programme was provided. Mrs. Sidney Dunn rendered very dramatically selections from *No Thoroughfare* and from *A Christmas Carol*, both of which were much enjoyed. Mr. Bell-Smith, of Toronto, a well-known Dickens reciter, gave with a nice appreciation of their humour "David Copperfield and the Waiter" and the episode of Horatio Sparkins from *Sketches by Boz*, both being received with much enthusiasm. The programme was varied by several songs given by Mr. Edwin Skedden.

HULL.—An interesting and successful session was brought to a close on April 3rd, when the members gave themselves up to the enjoyment of a programme of "Fun, Frolic, and Fancy." This consisted of a series of dramatic sketches, illustrating typical episodes in *Our Mutual Friend*, a book which at previous meetings had been studied and discussed. Eight short sketches were arranged, and the various parts were taken entirely by members of the Branch. The performance was gone through in mid-Victorian costume, with the properties indicated by the text. Miss Cecilia Dick admirably portrayed the pompous Mrs. Wilfer; the two

daughters Bella and Lavvy found good exponents in Miss Beatrice and Miss Laura Marris; Mrs. Holdsworth was wonderfully "life-like" as Miss Peecher, the schoolmistress; and Miss Phoebe Ives made a capital Jenny Wren, and was just as good in representing Mary Ann, the school-girl. Miss A. Hall in a spirited manner enacted the part of Mrs. Lammle, the adventuress; Miss Eleanor Watson left nothing to be desired in her representation of Betty Higden; and Miss Ruby Roberts made a typical and cheerful Mrs. Boffin. The part of Lizzie Hexham was well carried out by Miss Minnie Norris. The male impersonations were cleverly presented by Mr. Judge Bolton (Mr. Boffin and Jenny Wren's "bad boy"), Mr. T. H. Leahair (Mr. Venus), Mr. J. M. Borrow (Silas Wegg and Charlie Hexam), Mr. T. H. Broadbent (Bradley Headstone), and Mr. H. J. Smith (the boy "for the stuffed canary"). The efforts of the players met with warm appreciation from the audience, and although one or two parts had to be dropped out through illness and other causes, the entertainment was a great success. During the evening Mr. Mortimer Petty, M.A., was presented with a pair of framed portraits of Charles Dickens as a small token in recognition of "devoted services to the Branch during his presidency, 1905-1907." The annual meeting and election of officers for the session 1908-1909 preceded the dramatic sketches. Mr. H. B. Browne, M.A., was asked and agreed to continue his presidency for another year; Mr. F. Bacon and Mr. H. E. Dibb were re-elected hon. treasurer and auditor respectively; Mr. G. E. Tindal was elected secretary.

LIVERPOOL.—The final meeting of the Liverpool Branch was held on April 7th, when a large number of members assembled. The president, Dr. Edgar Browne, took the chair, and the business of the meeting having been transacted and the secretary (Mr. James Watkins) and the treasurer (Mrs. Bell) having been re-elected, the chairman called upon Mr. Bodey to give a paper entitled "On Eating and Drinking." The lecturer handled this fascinating subject in a most interesting manner, and the members illustrated the subject extremely well at a social held afterwards. A most satisfactory report was made by the secretary at the council meeting prior to the lecture, showing an increase in membership and a further extension of the social work of the Fellowship. The accounts showed a credit balance of £17, and it was decided that a subscription of £2 2s. each should be sent to the Anti-Sweating League, the "Tiny Tim" Cot at Heswall, and the Children's Infirmary of this city.

MAIDSTONE.—An enjoyable evening was spent at Hollingworth Hall on April 12th, when Mr. B. W. Matz gave a lantern lecture entitled "A Chat about Dickens." Councillor E. Vaughan presided. Songs were given by Mrs. Sidney Hunt and Mr. P. J. Brown, and a recitation from *Barnaby Rudge* by Mr. R. H. Howarth.

MELBOURNE.—The birthday meeting was held at Austral Salon, on February 3rd, and was well attended by ordinary members and visitors. The programme was particularly interesting on account of a very clever lecturette entitled "Our Mutual Friend in relation to his Predecessors," by Mr. H. Gyles Turner, V.P., one of the leading lights of the literary world of Australia. Other items were rendered as follows:—Recitation, "Mr. Dumps," by Miss Lilia Walton; paper, "Mrs. Gamp," by Mr. Frank Scrivenor, V.P.; songs, "Lasses and Lads" and "The Low-backed Car," by Mrs. W. J. Masters. On March 2nd, at the same place, Mr. Fred W. Scrivenor, V.P., occupied the chair. This meeting was again marked by the satisfactory number of visitors present in addition to members. The programme, which was excellent in every detail, was received with great enthusiasm by the audience, and was as follows:—Recital, "Nicholas Nickleby," by Miss Viva Huckster (pupil of Miss

Josephine Samuel); paper, "The Murdstone Régime," by Miss Fraser; recitation, "David Copperfield," by Mr. Victor Trotman (pupil of Miss Josephine Samuel (an enthusiastic member of the Fellowship); paper, "The Patriarchate" (*Little Dorrit*), Mr. W. A. Callaway; recital, "Toby Veck," by Miss Ray Windas; and an address, "Lawson's Appreciation of Dickens," by Rev. E. Rorke (president).

PLYMOUTH.—The last meeting for the season was held in the Lecture Hall, of the Y.M.C.A., Plymouth, on April 30th, when Mr. W. H. K. Wright was in the chair. Readings were given by Mr. Charles Quain (hon. sec.), Mr. J. K. Bond, Mr. Wright, and Captain T. J. Haddy, R.N. Mrs. Hosking and Master Stanley Hosking contributed songs. The hon. sec. reported a total membership of 107, and mentioned that the meetings would recommence at the end of August, when he hoped to enrol many new sympathisers with the genius of the great author. Mr. Charles Quain has worked very hard in starting the Fellowship, and is to be congratulated on the success it has attained in so short a time.

SOUTHAMPTON.—The annual meeting was held on April 27th, when the secretary presented the report and balance-sheet, both of which were adopted, the latter showing a small credit balance. The report showed a decrease of 26 in the number of members as compared with last year. Mr. J. R. Smith, J.P., was unanimously re-elected president, Miss E. E. Moody as hon. secretary and treasurer, and Mr. W. Newnham as hon. auditor. Nearly all the vice-presidents and committee were re-elected.

WEST LONDON.—This branch held its final meeting of the session at the Lecture Hall, Ealing, on Thursday, May 14th. The membership has considerably increased during the year, and the session has been very successful. The closing meeting was devoted to competitions, and there were some excellent puzzle representations of characters from Dickens. Several members chose *Oliver Twist*, but those of *Dedlock*, *Barkis*, *Micawber*, *Sir Mulberry Hawk*, the *Nipper*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Our Mutual Friend*, *Fogg*, *Pip*, *Chick*, *Landless*, and the *Uncommercial Traveller* were also very good. The first lady's prize for the greatest number guessed was tied for by Mrs. Seward and Miss Paul, the latter winning a dainty bag, and Mrs. Seward a waist buckle. Mr. Kingsford won the first gentleman's prize (a gunmetal cigarette-case); Mr. Hurdle and another gentleman competed for the second prize, which Mr. Hurdle unfortunately lost; Mr. Jacob's prize of one guinea was won by Miss Eilian Hughes, who read a delightful paper on the moral beauty of the characters of Dickens in which she especially mentioned the Rev. Mr. Hughes in *The Uncommercial Traveller*. Mr. Romaine also read an interesting paper on Mr. Pecksniff, and Mr. Hurdle criticised Harold Skimpole.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

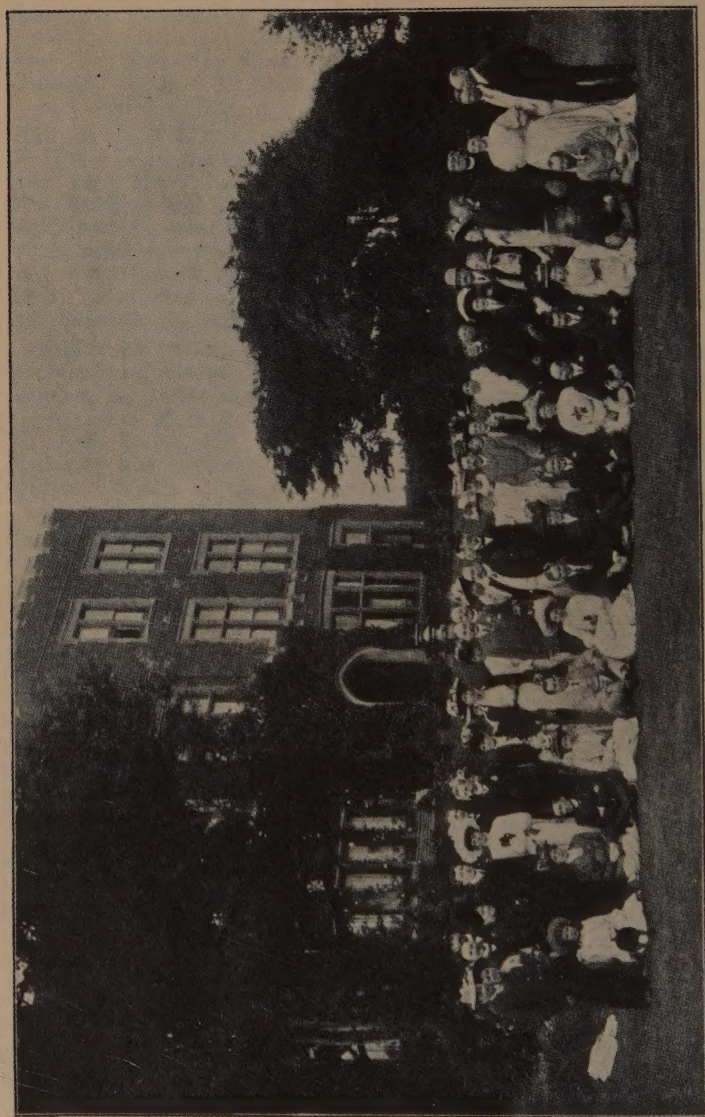
Miscellaneous Papers, Plays, and Poems. By Charles Dickens. Uniform with the "Gadshill" Edition. Two vols. 12s. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.

"Dickens as a Journalist." By B. W. Matz. *Fortnightly Review*, May. "Britannia's Bulwarks: A Liberty with Dickens." Taken by Harold Begbie. *Westminster Gazette*, May 16th.

"Portsmouth Street, No. 14 (The Old Curiosity Shop)." *Notes and Queries*, May 5th.

"The Genius of Dickens." By E. Kidson. *Academy*, April 25th.

"A Wearside Relic of Dickens." By R. Smith. *Newcastle Journal*, April 25th.



THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP AT BROADSTAIRS, JUNE 20TH, 1908
Photograph taken in the grounds of Bleak House, by S. H. Smith